



June 1998

# Bankruptcy CONFIDENTIAL

## Bankruptcy Court Receives 100th Chapter 7 Case Over the Internet

Another milestone was reached for the Electronic Case Filing system as the Clerk's Office at the United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of California received its 100th case on May 16.

"With this filing, we have proven that a minimal investment in software can pay big dividends for both attorneys and their clients," said Barry Lander, Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court. "There are no extra copy costs, no runner fees, and there is no waiting in line for the next clerk."

The Bankruptcy Court received its first Chapter 7 bankruptcy case electronically filed over the Internet in March of this year. The case was filed by attorney John Colwell of the Law Offices of Reed Langlois, who also filed the 100th case.

The Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system allows trained lawyers to prepare documents using Windows or Macintosh-based software, convert them to Acrobat PDF file format, and



*Law Office staff receives training in ECF procedures  
(MCLE credit may soon be available)*

file the documents from their computer desktop over the Internet. Russ Reynolds, U.S.B.C. Systems Manager, points out that the "PDF files retain all of the original formatting of the documents, which is particularly important for petitions, motions and other pleadings where there is a need to easily find information." The public now has access to these pleadings from the court's website (see story on page 2), reducing the need to come to the courthouse to review files.

"It is our goal to create a system that is easy to use, balanced with the legal requirements of the Bankruptcy Code and Rules," added Lander. "We think we have achieved this balance in our implementation of the ECF system."

The vision for the ECF system began five years ago when the court met with its customers to develop a long-range plan. One of the conclusions was to create a paperless (or at the least, a "less paper") court.

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# Bankruptcy Court Launches New Interactive Website

[www.casb.uscourts.gov](http://www.casb.uscourts.gov)

We are proud to announce our new website which allows customers to conduct the full range of business with the Clerk's office without leaving their offices.

"One of our goals is to provide the best level of customer service possible," said Barry Lander, Clerk of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. "Many Internet sites provide access to information, but at our site you can conduct business without the need to come to the courthouse."

The website allows users to:

- Open new bankruptcy cases and file pleadings via ECF;
- Request a hearing date;
- Review dockets and see the actual pleadings;
- Reserve a case file at the courthouse for your review;
- Order copies of closed files from the Federal Records Center.

"Imagine, you are in Oceanside and you drive to the Weinberger Courthouse to review a file, only to learn that the file is checked out for a hear-

ing," Lander said. "With our reservation system and 24 hours' notice, we can let you know whether that file is available and then hold it until you arrive."

The site is organized as if you were physically at the Jacob Weinberger U.S. Courthouse. For navigation, users need only think of a visit to the courthouse. Where would I go in the courthouse to review a file or to file a document? To view an on-line record, you would visit the "File Room." To file pleadings or open new cases, you would step up to the "Front Counter." And for  
*(continued on page 3)*



Our home page is your gateway to the 21st Century.

**Website (continued)**

information, you would check the "Bulletin Board." It is that simple.

An abundance of other information (rules, forms, etc.) to view and download can be found on the site. "We haven't forgotten that sometimes all someone wants is a copy of the latest court forms," Lander added. Links to legal reference points on the Internet also can be found.

Your comments and/or suggestions about the website are appreciated and can be sent via e-mail to [infocasb@ce9.uscourts.gov](mailto:infocasb@ce9.uscourts.gov).

**ECF continued**

This shared vision has now become a reality through the efforts of the court's ECF Committee, which is charged with the responsibility for implementing the ECF system. "It is the dedication of the judges and staff that has made this day possible," Lander continued. "They created the vision and now they have implemented it."

ECF was developed with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts as a prototype for possible national implementation. The Bankruptcy Court in San Diego is partnered in this effort with four other Bankruptcy Courts and four District Courts. The

prototype in San Diego is focusing first on Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases, commonly referred to as "Liquidation." Expansion to Chapter 13 debt reorganization cases and finally, to Chapter 11 reorganization cases is planned.

## ***Adobe Announces Special Pricing for Acrobat Software***

Here is some special news for those law offices contemplating electronic case filing via the ECF system at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of California.

Adobe is offering Windows 95 users their Acrobat Reader and PDF Writer for \$29.95. PDF Writer is used to create Portable Document Format (PDF) documents. This offer is valid through the end of June. Check out their website located at: **[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)**

For those interested in the full-featured version of Acrobat 3.0, special law office pricing of \$99 is available by calling (888) 502-5275. This full version allows you to combine multiple files into a single document and has more advanced features you may need later.

## ***Copy Vendor Contract Ends***

As of June 1st, Court Copies and Images on the lower level is no longer providing copy services for the public. This caught us by surprise, and we are struggling to catch up with this last-minute change in our copy services. But out of any crisis comes opportunity. Although we are having to take some small steps backwards, the long-term picture looks bright.

We are taking a fresh look at our copy process and expect some exciting news for you in about 30 to 45 days.

Discussions are now taking place to install one or more coin-operated copiers in the File Review area. These copiers will accept "copy cards" sold by the vendor. A coin changer may also be installed. The coin-operated copiers will help casual, small volume users.

For our volume-copy customers, we are working quickly to put "on-line" our newly filed cases and pleadings. Although the schedule is still being developed, our goal is to make these documents available to our customers for download or printing. Please keep an eye on the "Bulletin Board" located on our website for the latest information.